

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

CASE ORIGINATED AT **BOSTON**

FILE NO.

REPORT MADE AT BOSTON	DATE WHEN MADE APR 26 1954	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE 1/11; 3/22, 24, 29-31; 4/15, 17, 20, 21/54	REPORT MADE BY JAMES T. SULLIVAN
TITLE FRANCES HOPE DAVIS, nee HALE Ala, Mrs. Robert Gorham Davis; Mrs. George Patrick Wood, Mrs. Claud Cockburn, Mrs. Hermann Brunck			CHARACTER OF CASE 39482 SECURITY MATTER - C

SUMMARY REPORT

SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:

Subject as FRANCES HOPE HALE born Columbus Junction, Iowa, 11/2/03. Married successively to GEORGE PATRICK WOOD, CLAUD COCKBURN, HERMANN BRUNCK, and ROBERT GORHAM DAVIS. During interview on 3/22/54 admitted Communist Party membership at Washington, D.C., from fall of 1934 to approximately January, 1937, during period of her employment by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Stated she was granted permission to leave the Communist Party in February, 1937, by J. PETERS, reputed Soviet espionage leader in the United States, whom she knew as "PETE" and "STEVE." Subsequently she permitted one "YOUNG," first name unknown, whom she believes was involved in Communist Party efforts to assassinate LEON TROTSKY, to store his Communist Party files in her New York City home during 1937.

AGENCY cc - State (Transport - Security)
REQ. REC'D 5-22-54
REP'T FORW. 6-11-54
BY *[Signature]*

**DECLASSIFIED BY 42 TAP/abr
ON 7-18-85**

APPROVED AND FORWARDED: *[Signature]* SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE

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Mrs. DAVIS stated, "I have racked my brain but I cannot recall what Communist Party name I used." She stated that it was her best recollection that HAROLD WARE had decided that no Communist Party membership cards would be issued to the individual Communist Party members employed by the Federal Government.

Mrs. DAVIS stated that all the Communist Party members known to her were expected to "do lots of studying about Communism and Communist Party literature." She recalled, "I had to buy masses of literature" and had been expected to write numerous papers and reports for the Party concerning questions introduced in Party literature, as well as questions brought up in the individual cell meetings.

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It was her best recollection that the leadership at meetings was rotated and that each individual member served as chairman at meetings and likewise made speeches as Educational Director or on a special project assigned him. She pointed out that it should be recalled that the various individuals active in the Communist Party with her included many individuals rather highly placed in the Federal system.

She recalled that she, in company with another individual who is extremely well known in the labor relations field, attempted to rewrite MARX in simple terms and do away with the oftentimes deliberately vague and ambiguous terminology used in Communist Party literature. She could not recall whether this project had ever been completed.

Mrs. DAVIS stated that the Party adopted extremely secretive means in providing Party literature to its concealed members in the Washington area. She stated that, although the bulk of the Communist Party literature was openly sold in book stores in Washington at that time, the concealed Communist Party members were not permitted to buy the literature openly but instead had this literature mailed to them at their home address or post office box or in some cases had it delivered by hand.

IV. DEFECTION FROM THE COMMUNIST PARTY

Mrs. DAVIS stated that during the last period of HERMANN BRUNCK's illness, she had necessarily given up much of her Communist Party work but had made her position known to various individuals highly placed in the Communist Party at Washington, D.C. She stated these individuals were extremely sympathetic to her position, stating their understanding of the great mental strain to which she had been subjected in caring for her husband through his illness. Mrs. DAVIS then pointed out that HERMANN BRUNCK had had strong suicidal tendencies toward the end of his life and that she had lived in a state of fear and anxiety for many months with him.

most part the small cell membership remained fairly constant.

Mrs. DAVIS stated that she had been designated a unit leader and that her third husband, HERMANN BRUNCK, had likewise been designated a unit leader. Mrs. DAVIS recalled that she was extremely active in the Party throughout 1935 and 1936 and up to approximately February, 1937, when she left the Washington area following the death of HERMANN BRUNCK in a mental institution.

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She pointed out that, while she had had no access to any secret files during her employment by the Federal Government, she had been asked to obtain if possible any formulae dealing with nutrition. She stated she cannot now recall the identity of the individual who suggested the obtaining of types of information through their Federal employment but recalled that various individuals in the different units had obtained information dealing with their own particular employment. She stated she likewise cannot recall the identity of the individual to whom this information was turned over.

In her own particular case she recalled that inasmuch as she had been engaged to write on matters dealing with nutrition she had been able to obtain Vice President HENRY A. WALLACE's formula for soy bean milk.

Mrs. DAVIS estimated that she knew perhaps 50 individuals who were involved in the various Communist Party underground cells set up by HAROLD WARE among Government workers. She stated also that in her numerous conversations with many individuals at Washington during the complete years of 1935 and 1936 she could estimate that the infiltration of Government by Communist cells involved hundreds of individuals. She iterated her earlier statement concerning HAROLD WARE's edict, "Don't appear to be a liberal. Don't join any organizations."

Mrs. DAVIS pointed out that the Communist Party even at that time was greatly interested in the procuring of money for the implementation of its program. She recalled that each Communist Party member was expected to contribute at least 10 per cent of his over-all salary to the Party. She also pointed out that, although her yearly salary was listed as approximately \$4,000 annually, it should be recalled that Federal workers had taken a pay cut and that her own salary was probably between \$3,000 and \$3,500. Whatever the over-all amount was, Mrs. DAVIS stated the Party took 10 per cent of it for its own purposes. She stated she could not recall as of this particular time the identity of the individual who collected the money for the various cells set up by HAROLD WARE.

Mrs. DAVIS pointed out that her third husband, HERMANN BRUNCK, had been employed by the N.R.A. and thereafter had transferred his employment to another Federal agency, possibly the National Labor Relations Board.

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adopted the philosophy of Communism and were expounding its views in their public pronouncements. She recalled that the Very Rev. HEWLETT JOHNSON, the Dean of Canterbury, even at that time was in his speeches uttering comments which, to her mind, indicated a defense of Communism. She stated she has heard Dean JOHNSON speak on several occasions and has come to the conclusion that, "Even though he might not be a Communist Party member, I feel he was used by the Communist Party and by the Communist Party front organizations."

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III. ACTIVITIES IN THE COMMUNIST PARTY

Mrs. DAVIS stated that by this time she had met HERMANN BRUNCK at Washington, D.C. and had discussed with him the advisability of their joining the Communist Party. She recalled that BRUNCK had discussed this question with numerous other Communist Party members at Washington and that these individuals had tried to recruit him into the Communist Party but had been unsuccessful.

Finally, in the late fall or winter of 1934, Mrs. DAVIS and BRUNCK were convinced "they had to take the practical step" and join the Communist Party.

She recalled that HERMANN BRUNCK spoke to an individual who was then employed by the NRA and who had talked to BRUNCK on numerous occasions in an effort to recruit him into the Party. She recalled also that this individual, who was a native she thought of New York City and who had studied at Columbia University, was one of the original members of the Communist Party cell set up by HAROLD WARE about 1933 or 1934 in an effort to infiltrate the Federal Government. *BR*

She recalled that the group to which she and HERMANN BRUNCK had been assigned held meetings at least once a week. In addition, the leaders of the individual units were required to attend their own special meeting also on a weekly basis. Mrs. DAVIS stated these meetings were held in various private homes in Washington, D.C. and were extremely secretive.

She recalled that HAROLD WARE had handed down the edict that none of the individuals in these secret Communist Party cells were under any circumstances to join any open liberal or progressive organizations, excepting a union, but even if these secret Communist Party members did join a union, HAROLD WARE stated, they were not to become active in the leadership of the union itself.

Mrs. DAVIS stated that each unit of the various cells set up by WARE had about 5 members in it. She recalled also that while there had been some reshuffling of the personnel within the individual cells for the